

Yehudah said to his brothers, "What gain will there be if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?" (37:26)

Simply, Yehudah interceded on Yosef's behalf, asserting that the brothers would not benefit from killing him. *Pituchei Chosam* cites the *pasuk* in *Yeshaya 1:15* wherein the *Navi* laments, "Even when you pray very much I (Hashem) do not listen to you because your hands are full of blood." We infer from here that the *tefillos*, prayers, of one who "spills blood," i.e., a murderer, are of no value. Ostensibly, the *Shevatim*, tribes, brothers, prayed three times each day since the *tefillos* had been introduced by the Patriarchs. The word "*betza*", *bais*, *tzaddik*, *ayin*, is an acronym for the three *tefillos* of the day: *boker*, *Shacharis*; *tzaharayim*, *Minchah*; *erev*, *Arvis*. Yehudah was implying something else to his brothers. "*Ma betza?* What do we gain from *davening* three times a day, if we kill Yosef?" Hashem does not listen to one who spills blood!

There is a story told about Horav Yechiel Meir Lipshutz, *zl*, who was a student of the *Kotzker Rebbe*, *zl*, who once rebuked a wealthy Jew in his town who was notorious for lending money for interest. This usurer would "suck the blood" out of the poor people whose misfortune it was to borrow money from him. This same person never missed a *tefillah b'tzibur*, coming to *shul* three times a day to *daven*. He told him, "What *betza* do you gain by going to *shul* three times a day if you spill the blood of poor people?"

While this is undoubtedly a good "*vort*", it should bear greater significance for us. All too often we attempt to absolve our lack of *mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro*, relationship between our fellow man, by expanding or emphasizing our *mitzvos bein adam l'Makom*, relationship with the Almighty. This is not effective. One cannot take advantage of his fellow man, regardless of the method or reason, and expect Hashem to look upon his *avodah*, service to Him, favorably. This is the epitome of a double-standard. Regrettably, many of us still view this as only a good *vort*, while we have a difficult time practicing the concept in our everyday lives.